CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

receiving a request for an information object at an address identified by a uniform resource locator (URL); and

mapping the URL to a corresponding anycast address for the information object.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising using resolving the anycast address for the information object to a unicast address for the information object.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising sending the information object to the client.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the request is received at an information object repository that is topologically closer to the client than any other information object repository.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the information object repository is selected according to specified performance metrics.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the performance metrics comprise one or more of: average delay from the selected information object repository to a source of the request, average processing delay at the selected information object repository, reliability of a path from the selected information object repository, available bandwidth in said path, and loads on the selected information object repository.

7. An information object repository configured to map a uniform resource locator (URL) for an information object to a network layer anycast address.

8. The information object repository of claim 7 being further configured to advertise anycast address using a network layer anycast routing protocol.

9. A network, comprising:

at least one client configured to request an information object using a uniform resource locator (URL); and

an information object repository configured to receive the request for the information object and to map the URL into a network layer anycast address.

10. The network of claim 9 wherein the information object repository is further configured to resolve the network layer anycast address into a unicast address.

11. The network of claim 10 wherein the information object repository is topologically closer to the requesting client than any other of a number of information object repositories in the network.

12. The network of claim 11 further comprising a Web router configured to select the information object repository that is closer to the requesting client than any other of the number of information object repositories in the network without regard as to whether the information object is actually stored at the selected information object repository.

13. The network of claim 12 wherein the Web router is further configured to select the selected information object repository according to specified performance metrics.

14. The network of claim 13 wherein the performance metrics comprise one or more of: average delay from the selected information object repository to a source of the request, average processing delay at the selected information object repository, reliability of a path from the selected information object repository, available bandwidth in said path, and loads on the selected information object repository.